

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY THEMES

Primary interpretive themes describe ideas, concepts, or messages about Blue Ridge Parkway that are so important all visitors should understand them. Based on the Parkway's purpose and significance, these themes provide guidelines for making decisions concerning which interpretive stories will be told to visitors and what interpretive facilities and activities will be required to tell those stories. Primary themes do not include everything that may be interpreted, but they include those ideas that are critical to understanding the Parkway's significance. All interpretive efforts (both media and personal service) should relate to one or more of the themes, and each theme should be addressed by some part of the interpretive program.

PARKWAY DESIGN / LANDSCAPE

The Blue Ridge Parkway originated to generate employment and promote tourism in the mountains of southern Appalachia; it continues to influence and provide great economic benefits to the region.

The Blue Ridge Parkway incorporates innovative and enduring design, engineering, and construction techniques that harmonize with the southern Appalachian landscape.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a linear park threaded by a motor road in which visitor driving and enjoyment of scenery is the primary objective.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is a human-manipulated environment that continues to shape park management practices.

BIOLOGY

The Blue Ridge Parkway has more diversity of habitat, and thus supports more plant species, than any other park in the United States.

The Blue Ridge Parkway provides a protected migration corridor for many forms of life.

Visitors and residents have long interacted with the Appalachian environment, both adapting to and altering the natural history of the area.

GEOLOGY

Blue Ridge Parkway stands at the summit of many local and regional watersheds that define the hydrological patterns of much of the southeastern United States.

The five mountain ranges of the Blue Ridge Parkway include the oldest mountain-building processes in the world and contain economically significant minerals.

AIR QUALITY, WEATHER, CLIMATE

Activities of people living outside the Blue Ridge Parkway and extreme weather conditions in the southern Appalachians influence the natural resources, visitation patterns, and air quality of the Parkway.

HUMAN CULTURE

The Blue Ridge Parkway conserves diverse and important examples of architecture, industry and transportation associated with the people and communities of the mountains in southern Appalachia.

The Blue Ridge Parkway preserves evidence of human occupation from prehistoric to contemporary times.

Many Blue Ridge Parkway sites have been tourist and vacation destinations for more than two centuries.

A unique Appalachian culture, defined by arts, crafts, music and social institutions, have evolved and persist in the region through which the Blue Ridge Parkway passes.

Media planners and Parkway interpreters will apply these themes to the National Park Service's Thematic Framework (1996) to develop compelling stories for presentation to visitors through individual interpretive activities and media. Appropriate Thematic Framework subjects could include Peopling Places, Creating Social Institutions and Movements, Expressing Cultural Values, and Transforming the Environment.